

Community And State Preserve Historic Bluff Farm

BLUFF, UTAH -- A community landmark in Bluff, Utah will remain intact thanks to a four-year long effort by a local historic group and various private and public conservation organizations. The 145-acre Curtis Jones Farm is now protected from development by a conservation easement. The farm is also the last of the once-extensive fields that surrounded the historic Mormon pioneer village of Bluff, which was founded by the "Hole-in-the-rock" pioneers of 1880. Its agricultural, open space, and scenic values are vital to the community's sense of place and unique rural character. The farm's hay, grain and fruit production is critical to the local Navajo and Anglo people.

A partnership comprised of The Bluff City Historic Preservation Association (BCHPA), The Utah Quality Growth Commission (QGC), the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF), and The Nature Conservancy of Utah today announced the purchase of a conservation easement on the farm in southern San Juan County. The parcel is important for its agricultural, open space and economic values to the community. The farm has been operated by Jones for 40 years. Jones agreed to sell the operation to the Bill Davis family of Bluff.

The perfect formula for Utah's retiring farmers and ranchers

The Jones project represents the ideal conservation easement for a landowner wishing to retire. The project was fairly simple as it brought together a willing buyer and a willing seller. Curtis Jones sold the land and the buildings on it to the Davis family at agriculture-value prices. Curtis also sold a separate conservation easement to the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food at a price that is generally the difference between the agriculture value and the value that a developer would pay for the land. Thus Jones receives full price for the land. The Davis family owns the title to a large, high-quality farm at an affordable price, and the community keeps an important economic and historic piece of property intact. The only restriction placed on the land is that it continue to be a productive

agricultural resource.

"I'm just really happy to see that this will still be a farm and that it will continue to be open space, which is so hard to find," said former landowner, Curtis Jones. "This was first a farm and it should always be a farm," he added.

"This farm is a community-defined cherished place," said Liza Duran, BCHPA board member. "That is why we came together to help protect this land that means so much to us."

The successful creation of the easement is the first of its kind by the Quality Growth Commission in Southeastern Utah. It now joins other projects in northern, central and southern Utah. The QGC contributed a grant of \$309,000 to the Jones project, the UDAF's Critical Agricultural Land Conservation Fund contributed \$72,000, the balance was raised from grants from the Nature Conservancy of Utah, the Eccles Foundation, and fundraising donations to BCHPA from over 200 individual contributors.

Lt. Governor Olene Walker Lends Support



From left: Bluff City Historic Preservation Assn. Treasurer, Liza Duran; San Juan County Commissioner, Ty Lewis; Lt. Gov., Olene Walker; and Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, Cary G. Peterson hold "gift" baskets of produce from the historic "Curtis Jones Ranch" in Bluff.

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UDAF Advises Livestock Owners To Guard Against Foot-And-Mouth Disease

Salt Lake City, Utah—State Veterinarian, Dr. Michael R. Marshall request today that Utah livestock owners take particular care to inspect their herds and guard against the introduction of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD). This advisory follows the March 13, 2001 announcement by the USDA that the United States banned imports of swine and ruminants (cattle, sheep, goats and cervidae) and many animal products from the European Union because of a FMD outbreak there.

"Foot-and-Mouth Disease does not affect people, yet it is one of the most economically-damaging livestock disease in the world," said Dr. Marshall. "An outbreak can cost billions of dollars to fight, and thousands of animals can be lost. We cannot afford to be complacent," Marshall added.

Utah and the rest of the nation have been free of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) since 1929.

Livestock owners are advised to regularly inspect their herds for any symptoms of disease, and take precautions to protect herds from possible contamination. That means limiting vehicle traffic and visitor access to your animals and property, thorough cleaning and disinfecting of clothing, footwear and equipment, and keeping new animals isolated for two weeks prior to adding them to the existing herd.

If you've traveled internationally, don't risk carrying disease home to your herd. Stay away from livestock for at least one week after your return. Disinfect your boots and wash your clothes before working with your livestock.

"Most importantly, livestock owners should report any symptoms of the disease in their animals immediately to their local, state or federal veterinarian," Marshall added.

For more information on FMD visit: www.ag.state.ut.us

Though there have been 26 outbreaks around the world since 1997, the most recent outbreaks in Great



left: USDA - APHIS's Robert King interviews international air passengers returning to Salt Lake International Airport. The inspection is one of many safeguards currently in place to guard against the introduction of Foot-and-Mouth Disease in the U. S.

Utah Power Offers Farmers Payments to Unplug Pumps

Utah Power and Light is offering Utah Farmers and ranchers a cash incentive to curtail electrical use during the upcoming irrigation season. In a March 15, 2001 letter to the Utah Public Utilities Commission, UP&L proposed its Irrigation Curtailment Program.

The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food advises agricultural operators to investigate the offer to determine if it is economically feasible for them. As of March 28, 2001 the PUC had not acted on the request.

UP&L states in its proposal, "The proposed program will provide qualifying irrigation customers the option of curtailing load in exchange for payment by PacifiCorp based on the customer's historic average monthly energy (kWh) usage. Under the proposed schedule, the Company will pay participating customers 10 cents per qualifying kWh. Participating customers will also not be billed the Customer Service Charge during the irrigation season. In order to qualify, participating customers currently receiving service under Electric Service Schedule No. 10 would agree to disconnect their pumps from Utah Power's electrical distribution system throughout the 2001 irrigation season." Contact UP&L for more information.

Highlights of 2002 Employee Compensation Package

by Conroy Whipple
Department of Human Resource Management

The recently adjourned Legislature has appropriated a multiple piece compensation and benefits package for the coming fiscal year. Included in the package is funding for merit increases, performance rewards, salary range adjustments to market levels, increased health care costs, and an improved life insurance benefit. The package is effective for the pay period beginning June 23, 2001.

The vast majority of employees will be eligible for a merit increase of 2.75 percent, or a one step increase. This will be given automatically to those whose performance level is standard or better and who are not on a longevity step, still on probation or on corrective action or discipline. In addition, agencies will have the discretion to reward high performance.

Finally, employees will receive additional insurance benefits. The legislature will fund an increase in the basic term life insurance provided to each employee from \$18,000 to \$25,000. As expected, health insurance costs have increased again this year but they will be funded from savings in the retirement program. However, employees enrolled in PEHP Preferred coverage will pay an additional 2 percent of their premium costs for a total of 7 percent and a higher co-payment for doctor visits.

Again this year, a select group of employees will receive market comparability increases. These are salary range adjustments designed to keep our compensation system on par with the private sector. When a salary range is adjusted upward, employees on the bottom steps of the range will receive additional steps to keep them "on range" at least at the minimum step. Employees who receive these adjustments will be notified in June of this year.

The number one priority in DHRM's long-term strategy is to move all salary ranges to market and keep them there. This will require annual adjustments to at least some of our pay ranges.

More information on this topic is available in the current *Capitol Connections*.